2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

133 262 have calm, shallow lagoons, abounding in fish and shellfish which are an important part of the diet. Most of these islands are deficient in food but rich in timber and jungle produce which provide the raw materials for their industries.

132 Lau has a tropical climate. During the dry season, which lasts from April to October, the cooling southeast trades blow regularly and the seas are calm. An extensive interisland canoe traffic is carried on during these months. The remainder of the year is rainy and warm with irregular winds, especially during the "hurricane" months of January, February, and March. Fortunately hurricanes are infrequent. Drought is a constant menace on the limestone islands, for rain is quickly absorbed by the sharp, porous limestone. There are no streams and practically all the fresh water used by the natives must be collected in tanks and utensils. On each island there are a few water holes which are usually brackish, but the native technique of living requires little fresh water.

361 The population of the islands is concentrated in coast villages. Each village is located on a sandy flat along the beach and is usually surrounded by a coconut grove. Frequently the site is planted with breadfruit trees. Usually the village land is divided into strips, which run from the beach to the cliffs; and each strip is owned and occupied by a clan (*matanggali*, formerly a hamlet in garden land or bush clearing, see p. 35). The clans of highest rank occupy the center of the village. Their houses dominate the ceremonial ground (*rara*), where village feasts are distributed and ceremonies, dances, and games are held.

A description of the islands and villages which were studied follows.

Kambara

621 133 Kambara is a basin-shaped mass of limestone, about 4.5 miles long and 3 miles wide. The rim of the basin is an irregular ridge about 60 meters high. Here and there the precipitous, seaward cliff falls away, giving space to a sand flat grown with coconut palms. On such flats are situated the four villages of the island: Tokalau, Lomatchi, Nggalinggali, and Undu. Kambara is nearly surrounded by a coral reef which breaks on the northwest coast, providing the only anchorage. The village of Tokalau is located opposite the anchorage.

Kambara combines the natural resources of both volcanic and limestone islands. The heavily forested interior of the island is honeycombed with pits and caverns. Pockets of red, residual soil of an acre or so are cultivated on the eastern edge of the basin and in the center where the elevation is only about 24.4 meters. A volcanic outcrop, Ndelaioloi, rising in the northwest part of the island to a height of 143.3 meters, provides the island's best soil, and here most of the gardens are located. The main garden products are manioc and sweet potato. A coarse quality of pandanus grows on Kambara. The principal

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

●132 Kambara is situated about 19 degrees south of the equator, and so has a tropical climate. During the dry season, which lasts from April to October, the cooling southeast trades blow regularly and the seas are calm. Most of the lively canoe traffic between the islands is carried on in these months. Although the temperature rarely falls below 70° the thin-blooded natives frequently shiver with cold, especially after the sun goes down. The remainder of the year is rainy and hot with irregular winds, especially during the "hurricane" months of January, February and March. At this time few native crews venture in canoes beyond the protecting reefs, for a small black cloud on the horizon can suddenly develop into an ugly squall which rips a mat sail and tosses a canoe about like a toy boat on a mighty ocean.

There is a difference in climate between the west and the east sides of Kambara. The east side is cooler and less humid than the west on account of the southeast trades. This may in part account for the greater energy and productivity in craftsmanship shown by the people of Undu and Tanggu compared to those of Tokalau and Lomatchi. During the hot season in Tokalau the temperature in my native hut, which had a sheet iron roof, averaged 90° F. at seven in the morning and 102° at two in the afternoon.

123 514 [343] In the heat of the day we frequently worked under a pavilion roofed with plaited coconut leaves, near the beach, in the hope of catching whatever slight breeze might be playing along the shore. There was considerable amusement over selection of a site for this pavilion. During the first weeks in Tokalau I chose the coolest spot along the beach and requested that the pavilion be built there. Located some distance from the village, the place was sheltered by palms and brush. At this time I still had the naive notion that I could arrange a little privacy for interviews with informants who frequently hesitate to speak in the presence of others, and also for the few precious leisure hours I had to enjoy this "South

3:Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

all the shellfish in a basket, which he took to Kambara and presented to the god. Meanwhile the Kambara god gleefully had gathered all the mosquitoes on the island in a basket, which he gave in return for the shellfish. Only when the god of Oneata opened the basket on his own island and the swarm of mosquitoes began to bite did he realize that he had been tricked. Since that time Oneata has had mosquitoes and the people of Kambara have had the shellfish.

The rainy months constitute the main growing season in Lau, and from December to April the harvest is gathered. Yams and taro, the staples of Fiji, do not grow on the famine isles, but tapioca, which has become the staple of the southern islands since its introduction from South America in recent times, may be cut or planted at any time of the year. Hence it conveniently supplements the seasonal crops such as sweet potato, breadfruit, Tahitian chestnut (*Inocarpus edulis*) and other tropical fruits, and provides a source of food between harvests.

Compensating for poor garden lands, the limestone islands have calm, shallow, reef-fringed lagoons which shelter fisherfolk and their small canoes from the open sea. So plentiful is the supply of fish and shellfish in the lagoons that practically no deep sea fishing is attempted, although barracuda and other large sea fish are plentiful in Lauan waters.

The large sea turtle, which grows to a weight of over two hundred pounds in Lau, is considered the greatest sea delicacy. No one who has chased this darting prey the length of a lagoon with a group of canoes can forget the thrill of a turtle hunt. It is one of the greatest sports in Lau. Inasmuch as turtle is food for chiefs and nobles, turtle hunting, breeding, netting, and preparation are protected by special tabus and rites, and the flesh is eaten only at feasts. Pigs, the only large mammals in the group, are also relished. They are of the gawky, South Sea type with funny long legs and razor backs, but of excellent flavor when steamed in the earth oven.

AVERAGE RAINFALL IN LAU.

●132

Month	MUNIA (H.H.Steinmetz) Average of 29 years to 1924	MUNIA (H.H.Steinmetz) Average of 28 years to 1923	NAMBAVATU Average of 5 years to 1924	NAMBAVATU Average of 4 years to 1923
January	7.64	7.86	7.36	8.29
February	7.67	7.77	7.79	7.58
March	9.05	8.93	9.41	9.61
April	8.46	8.59	13.08	15.50
May	5.31	5.17	5.72	5.52
June	4.36	4.35	2.67	2.63
July	2.80	2.69	-	2.70
August	3.91	3.82	5.06	2.01
September	3.51	3.53	4.91	4.46
October	-	4.94	-	4.01
November	-	5.58	-	4.38
December	-	7.11	-	11.08
Annual Average	-	70.33		77.28

1924 was an unusual year and upset the previous general average.

Figures obtained in October 1924.

[p.8]